

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action mailed April 19, 2006, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration. To further prosecution of the application, each of the issues raised in the Office Action is addressed herein.

Claims 4-116, 120-226 and 228-234 were previously pending in this application. In this response, claims 4, 6-11, 14, 35, 120, 122-127, 130 and 151 have been amended. Claims 5, 62, 121 and 179 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. No new matter has been added. The application as now presented is believed to be in allowable condition.

A. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation that in item 8 on page 11 of the Office Action, claims 109-116, 226 and 228-234 have been allowed.

Applicants also note with appreciation that in item 9 on page 12 of the Office Action, claims 5-14, 27-34, 40-72, 75-82, 90, 94-104, 121-130, 143-150, 156-189, 192-199, 207 and 211-221 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims. Accordingly, while not acceding to the propriety of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), Applicants have amended independent claims 4, 35, 120 and 151 so as to accept the subject matter deemed allowable by the Examiner and further prosecution toward allowance.

Claim 4 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 5, which the Office Action has indicated would be allowable. Minor edits have been made to the wording of the limitations of claim 5 to improve readability. Claim 5 has been canceled, and dependent claims 6-11 and 14 also have been amended to adjust dependencies based on the cancellation of claim 5.

Claim 35 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 62, which the Office Action has indicated would be allowable. Claim 62 has been cancelled.

Claim 120 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 121, which the Office Action has indicated would be allowable. Minor edits have been made to the wording of the limitations of claim 121 to improve readability. Claim 121 has been canceled, and dependent

claims 122-127 and 130 also have been amended to adjust dependencies based on the cancellation of claim 121.

Claim 151 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 179, which the Office Action has indicated would be allowable. Claim 179 has been canceled.

Applicants reserve the right to file one or more applications directed to the subject matter of the claims prior to the amendments herein.

B. Claim Rejections

The Office Action rejected claims 4, 15-26, 35-39, 73-74, 83-89, 91-93, 105-108, 120, 131-142, 151-155, 190-191, 200-206, 208-210 and 222-225 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Bowen et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,057,981). These rejections are rendered moot by the amendments herein.

CONCLUSION

It is respectfully believed that all of the pending claims have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment set forth in the Office Action does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Furthermore, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify any concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application should now be in condition for allowance. A notice to this effect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes, after this amendment, that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the Applicants' representative at the telephone number indicated below to discuss any outstanding issues relating to the allowability of the application.

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicants hereby request any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, that is not covered by an enclosed check, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 23/2825.

Dated: July 18, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

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